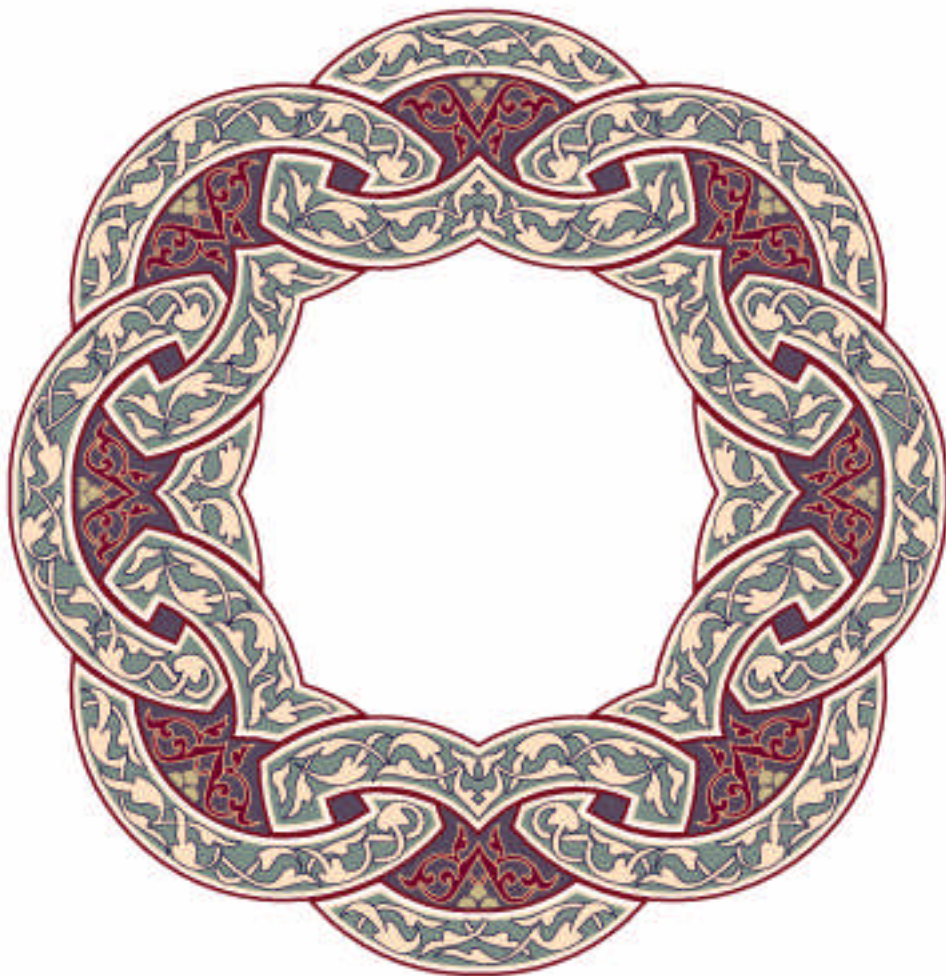


English Versification, 1570–1980

A Reference Guide
With a Global Appendix
Hypertext Version

T. V. F. Brogan



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Introduction

I: Purposes, Perspectives

Everyone knows that a bibliographic review of the work produced in a given field is not, finally, a very powerful instrument. It is certainly not a "speculative instrument"; it will not provide us with a keen new blade to cut our thickened thinking into ever-finer discriminations. It is not, of course, the synthesis antecedent to a new theory, a potent reformulation of knowledge already too well known to seem interesting into a penetrating new account of origins, influences, structure, analogues, or consequences. It is not even a piece of solid and patient scholarship, whereby a certain span of history is explicated and made perspicuous to eyes unfamiliar with the local customs and beliefs, or whereby an old idea is revitalized and legitimized in our terms as well as its own. A bibliographic review will not serve these functions, or if it does, it will do so only indirectly and by implication, not demonstration.

If it is at all competent, though, it can accomplish two things. First, it can provide the irreplaceable conspectus, the single synoptic field of view for what has so far been proposed, argued, refuted, and proven in a field. No one proceeds very far in theory without a clear sense of what is already known as well as what is missing--which avenues have widened out or else turned out to be dead ends--and so there is value in having all the known, published work searched out and listed, if not discussed and evaluated, in one location.

Second, a review can serve to indicate the historical and intellectual "contour" of a region. It can indicate the major points of interest which have become obligatory and must not be overlooked as well as those still more intriguing minor monuments located well away from the major thoroughfares of intellectual commerce which have been all but forgotten in the rush of history but which have significance and value well beyond whatever may be suggested by their more modest facades or more obscure locations. And it can also indicate, in contrast, those more grandiose edifices which have been given repute

completely beyond all their actual value. It can steer the discriminating traveler away from the gaudy and derivative.

A review can provide, in short, conspectus and contour, and if it does accomplish these ends, then it will be a useful, albeit secondary, intellectual instrument. If it accomplishes them very well indeed, then it can serve one further function, that one considerably more valuable than the other two: a review can by codification of the work of the past focus and refine the work of the future. It can save researchers, thinkers, and readers--indeed, in the present case, all who wonder why verse should have the structure (hence effects) that it does--from the fate determined for those who, in Santayana's dictum, fail to learn the lessons of history. By signposting the dead ends and the unlikely avenues, it can hasten our progress forward.

More rapid progress is a particularly urgent task for versification just now, it being a field which in historical terms has been (it is not too extreme to say) a great mass of ignorance, confusion, superficial thinking, category mistakes, argument by spurious analogy, persuasive definitions, and gross abuses of both concepts and terms. Progress in the field has been repeatedly diverted and obfuscated by vehemently defended by eccentric theories for over three centuries, and the result, to address the plain fact of the matter, has been that neither the structure nor the elements of versification is understood very well even today. We do not need any more talk of *shorts* and *longs*, *acephalous*, *acatalectic*, or *arsis*, nor elaborate schemas categorizing the types of off-rhyme, nor really any more student's manuals which reduce subtle and highly complex systems of verbal dynamics to the baldest imaginable terms and definitions. For though it is true that metrical structure (the principal component of verseform) is in essence an extremely simple pattern of extremely simple elements--indeed, elements which have been known and recognized widely for centuries--it is a system which rests upon linguistic material that continues to astound us by its intricacy, even for what little of it we understand. The full and adequate explanation of English verse-structure still remains to be written; indeed, I judge it is still about half a century away. Those of us who look forward to a unified field theory find it painful to live in a pre-Newtonian age. But we will never have such a theory at all until we survey, understand fully, then divest ourselves of the enormous conceptual errors of the past.

For such a divestiture we need a survey and a guide, and that is what I have sought to provide here. This book is intended to collect, list, classify by subject, summarize, describe, generally evaluate, cross-reference, and index by poet and by author all known printed studies of English versification from their origin in the Renaissance, Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* in 1570, up to January 1980, 1979 being the last year for which complete bibliographical indexing is available. Further, the book intends to place English versification as a system within the larger frame of all the versification-systems of the world; to this end, a long Appendix listing selected major studies on other languages is added at the end. Versification properly is, or will be, a global discipline.

The critical and scholarly interest in versification has suffered a virtual explosion in the last two decades. I say "suffered" because the mass of new work has been by no means a direct advance. Even though interest has perhaps never been wider or keener, it has been accompanied by a very palpable ignorance of the historical tradition and resources. One major new theory, having almost no similarity at all to the traditional methods before it and making very little effort to justify its key terms, has been proposed, debated, and finally (in my view) debilitated if not demolished. Meantime the traditional methods, never entirely worked out formally, have fallen into desuetude. Too, scholars in other disciplines--folklore, linguistics, musicology--feeling the keen lash to publish or perish so widely applied in the academies these days have begun sorties into the region of poetics to see if the territory is inviting or the natives easy to subdue. Those raids which have been quick-strike-and-retreats have been for the most part rebuffed by the locals, but those invaders who have shown an interest in peaceful settlement and mutually profitable commerce have been accepted. A precise linguistics, a careful study of tune and text, an ontology of performance, a phenomenology of reading--all these can be valuable additions to the economy of poetics.

Probably what is most extraordinary about the recent studies, though, is their sheer number. The flood of books and articles devoted to versification written in the last two decades has not been equalled since this time last century, when Jakob Schipper's seminal *Englische Metrik* (1880-88) provoked a heavy flurry of interest in prosodic matters for over thirty years. Twentieth-century poetics has shown very little interest in nineteenth-century philology, but perhaps we have come full cycle. Perhaps as centuries draw to an end our minds turn into channels deeper than any *Zeitgeist*, grooves cut into our unthought consciousness of cycles, numbers, and spans. Perhaps Yeats--even Nietzsche--was right.

II: Design of the Book

Studies of literary scholarship generally have three dimensions--a theoretical subject, an exemplar subject, and a methodology. Thus in metrical studies, for example, we find articles on the nature of meter (a theoretical issue; such studies will take their examples wherever they may be found), or on Chaucer's metrical craft (the examples are specified or constrained, but the underlying theoretical assumptions may or may not be evident), or on Generative Metrics (wherein a new analytical methodology is explicated). Or rather, we ought to find three dimensions, ideally. In practice we find the most heterogeneous mixtures, the studies themselves usually not entirely sure which dimension they are focusing upon, their titles clever but uninformative or misleading, their methodology often unstated at best or unconscious at worst (especially in many older studies), their theoretical assumptions entirely unexamined. The extreme case is Saintsbury, whose work might be said to address virtually everything and effectively nothing at once.

The distinction between theoretical subject and exemplar subject corresponds to the general difference between essays that are "theoretical" and "critical." In conventional terms, literary essays are either mainly theoretical, in which case they address some problems of conceptualization or application, the particular poems or poets discussed being important merely as examples, or else they are mainly critical (historical), in which case they examine poems by one poet or else a few poems by several different poets with the aim of elucidating their practice as craftsmen, the theory and method by which the examination is conducted being scarcely "foregrounded" at all.

Methodology is given no special attention in the organization of this book except in one particular case, in Chapter Six, where an alternative treatment was undesirable if not impossible. In the study of metrics the principal issues are unquestionably ones of the assumptions which underlie our methods of analysis. The first half of the Metrics chapter, therefore, is organized by the three major approaches (and their various subtypes) which have so far been proposed. And in the section on Generative Metrics I allow the single exception to the subject-categorization rule which controls the entire book; here the recent and seminal essay applying a major new theory to Chaucer is cited outside of the Middle English chapter (though referenced there), as are several other similar pieces. The tight, distinctive method so much emphasized and so recently developed in generative studies is thereby given precedence. Studies applying the generative method to poems in other languages, however, are cited in Appendix A, though cross-referenced at the end of the Generative Metrics section in the usual manner.

The book, therefore, is organized by theoretical subject. (Hence the absence of a Subject Index.) In any treatment of the poem as an aesthetic phenomenon (it would be pointless here to argue object against experience), the primary distinction must always be between the poem heard and the poem seen--the poem in the ear and in the eye (mind's ear, mind's eye)--the aural and the visual modes in which this artform is manifested. After the necessary preliminaries, Section III treats the former mode, Section IV the latter (the "sound a poem makes" as its phonetic structure being kept apart from actualized performances, which are "sound" at another level). Within this first-order distinction, the

domain of English versification (as theory) is treated under each of its topics or aspects: Sound, Rhythm, Meter, Syntax, Stanza, and Typography. The study of English versification begins with the high Renaissance in England, so that the historical range is effectively coterminous with Modern English, Middle and (especially) Old English being for our purposes distinct enough so as to virtually constitute foreign languages; these are set aside and treated separately in Part 2.

The body of the text then lists only those essays which are solely or predominantly devoted to the study of English versification, regardless of the language they are written in or their provenience. English is the subject, not the requisite medium of discourse. As T. S. Omond observed, it is indeed impossible, as well as undesirable, to collect every critical remark ever made on verse-structure; many articles mention meter or rhyme only in passing. Therefore I have taken as my minimal criterion for inclusion of a piece herein the requirement that it devote at least one section exclusively to matters of versification.

To the text proper a long Global Appendix has been added so that English versification may be seen in the larger context of all the other human language- and verse-systems of the world. Only the most rigorous comparative perspective can save us from many of the misconceptions about English verse-structure made in the past. And ultimately we ought not be much surprised if we find all the various forms of human verse-making to be axiomatically "all, all of a piece throughout." Scholarly studies treating verse in more than one language (these are increasingly common)--i.e., on a truly comparative basis--are systematically listed in the General Studies section of Appendix A unless one language is treated so heavily as to be virtually the sole subject. Therefore some discussions of English will be found there as well. Many other comparative studies naturally of interest to the student of English verse, such as those on the primordial origins of rhyme, have also had to be removed to the Appendices. Access to these works appears in the cross-referencing "See Also" citations.

Criticism of specific poets, then, is not a primary plane of cleavage here. For references to the versecraft of individual poets, readers should go directly to the first index, the Index of Poets; works in Old and Middle English are also indexed there, though since these Sections are relatively short (fifty pages), the specialist might well save time and gain scope by reading them entire. Some perusal of the Table of Contents will also be rewarding: Shakespeare and Milton are treated more or less exclusively in the subsection on Blank Verse in Chapter Six, as are Pope and Dryden to a lesser extent in the subsequent one on Couplet Verse, which should be read in conjunction with the section on poetic Rhyme in Chapter Four. Cummings and Thomas have attracted critical attention primarily for their [with all due disclaimers] "deviant" Syntax (Cummings for Typography as well, of course), Spenser for his Stanza of nines, Williams and Pound for Free Verse. Hopkins' metric obtains a subsection all its own as a species of Accentual Verse. However, other prosodically more catholic poets such as Eliot, Yeats, Bridges, Browning, Keats, and Donne appear so widely that the Index of Poets will be the quickest guide. Wyatt and Surrey, being important in the development of both the "horizontal" and the "vertical" dimensions of the sonnet [i.e. the pentameter line as well as the rhyme-scheme] are treated under both Accentual-Syllabic Verse and the Sonnet.

Throughout, I have relied on extensive, systematic cross-referencing (both within specific entries and at the end of each section) to bridge, join, and fuse all these artificial conceptual divisions, extending such lateral lattices even into the various sections of Appendix A on foreign verseforms: Tennyson had a curious interest in Persian meters, as it happens, well before the *fin-de-siècle* vogue for French forms in English; more crucially, Old English versification is not finally intelligible except as a species of Old Germanic. I am aware of the ultimate fictiveness of categories. In versification especially we tend to talk about meters and rhymes as though they were fish and fowl, but the truth is that to talk about the structure of verse at all well one must attend to everything equally, together, at once. One cannot talk about couplets, for example, without talking about rhyme, and then syntax; one cannot talk about stanza structure without talking about rhyme, and then meter; one cannot talk about rhyme without talking about the syntactic structure which surrounds and supports it; one cannot talk meaningfully about meter without talking about

grammar and the rhythms of stressing built into the phrase-structure of the language. So I separate these categories in this book at some risk, and partly too because the published studies themselves insist on such a partition. The very best studies, of course--the most synoptic and synthetic explanations, the most discriminating and illuminating comparisons, and the subtlest and most ingenious readings--thwarted me the most successfully. This seems natural and appropriate.

The microstructure of the text--the organization within each subsection or section--is alphabetical by author (as is immediately apparent), rather than chronological by date of publication, which in a number of cases would have been far more revealing. But in that event quick cross-checks and comparisons would have required the Author Index as intermediary, and this seemed too cumbersome to justify itself.

The format for entries requires but little comment. Except for the analyzed reference works cited in Chapters One through Three, each item in the text appears only once under a single citation number. In general, publication dates appear in chronological order, from first periodical publication (if any) through book publication and subsequent editions or reprints of the book (if any) though I have usually indicated the standard editions for iconic texts (Dryden's *Essay*, Wordsworth's "Preface," Campion's *Observations*, for example) as well as more convenient and more recent reprints. Subsequent versions of a piece which has been so heavily revised as to constitute a new argument sometimes receive separate citation. For dissertations subsequently revised into published books, however, I have taken the book form as the principal text, to be cited first, as opposed to dissertations merely published by offprint. In the case of books with successive editions having variant pagination, page numbers cited refer to the *first* edition unless otherwise indicated. Some minutiae of citation form have been adjusted for the sake of compression. Citations of reviews of books are regrettably incomplete in some cases; I have listed all those I came across, without having had the time to search them out systematically. I hope to correct this deficiency at some future date and will be grateful to receive full listings--as well as notices of any other corrections--from authors or any other readers. Very long review articles that are essentially substantive essays are cited separately.

Annotations, however, require some further discussion. As bibliographies go, this one provides commentaries after citations that are often relatively long. The rationale for this procedure, which would otherwise be objectionable, is simply that versification among all the other various humanistic disciplines is a field exceptionally confused and incoherent about basic principles and procedures. I was forced, therefore, to depart from a strictly descriptive function--synopsizing the subject and strategies of each piece--to wider observations about the position of certain work in the context of the whole theory or in conjunction with other work scattered far abroad and not hitherto or normally discussed in conjunction with the work under consideration (indeed, I consider this sort of synthesis effectively the whole rationale for a book like this), about the particular accomplishments or shortcomings of a piece (again, in comparison with other work), and, most importantly, about terminology. Terms such as *rhythm*, *meter*, *sound*, *cadence*, and *stress* are so widely and frequently abused in versification that I have spent considerably time ironing out inconsistencies between writers just so that comparison would be possible at all. Finally, since I consider the study of verse-structure to be an activity that is irrevocably concerned with matters *aesthetic*, I have at times affixed to the reviewing function as evaluative function as well, in that I have sometimes also commented on the internal structural coherence or cogency and the precision of method in a piece. That is, within such a welter of information as this book surveys (over six thousand pieces of scholarship), much of it (given the field) not entirely reliable, I have thought it essential to indicate not only arguments, assumptions, scope, connections, and relevant external facts which obtain but also the clarity and coherence--sometimes even elegance--of the work. This is not to be confused with judgments of the veracity or value of arguments and theories, about which scholars will naturally draw their own conclusions.

Such are the purposes and plan of this book. The only remaining topic on these matters which requires comment is the present work's relation to its predecessor, T. S.

Omond's *English Metrists*, published in 1921. I have deferred full discussion of this point to the citation for Omond's book at A5, and so I recommend that the reader, after noting briefly the items in Chapter Three on p. 15, proceed directly to pp. 7–9 before returning to the following sections below. To the statements made s.v. Omond I need add only that except in the few cases specifically indicated I have examined either directly or in xerox every item in the text of this book and the great majority of those in the Appendices.

III: Problems in Terminology: Prosody, Versification

Given the rather considerable attention which has been required, in the remainder of this book, for the complex and thoroughly confused but utterly crucial problem of terminology in versification, I would stand indicted by my own strictures were I to make no effort to define, in advance, my own use of terms. For the plain truth of the matter is that in studies of the structure of verse the use of terms such as *poetry*, *verse*, *accent*, *quantity*, *Numbers*, *Measure*, *rhythm*, *meter*, *prosody*, *versification*, *onomatopoeia*, and *rhyme / rime / ryme* historically and consistently has been nothing short of Pandemonium. It was so in 1580 and it remains so in 1980. Only after four centuries of erratic and eclectic theorizing are we beginning to see clearly the actual nature of the phonological particles of language and the abstract nature of the patterns they are arrayed in in verse, thereby coming finally to specify as rigorously as possible the import of the terms we use and the assumptions entailed by them.

The reason for such protracted confusion is not far to seek. Verse is a higher order of language, a higher level of organization of the elements which are already arrayed into the various simultaneously, multiply engaging orders that constitute language. Verse-patterning is contrived out of--superimposed upon yet also generated inductively from--the only available elements, the natural phonological features of each particular language, and hence its precise description--the indispensable preliminary--demands a precise understanding of language--i.e., a linguistics. And linguistics, nineteenth-century philology notwithstanding, is pre-eminently a twentieth-century science. Consequently, one comes to understand, much or most of the (staggering amount of) muddled thinking and nearly worthless terminology so common in versification prior to, say, the middle of this century is simply pre-linguistic confusion. The material of language is amazingly subtle and complex, and it is only natural that early attempts to discriminate, describe, and explain it would be crude and confused.

Historically, versification has been prey to more eccentricity and confusion, more nonthink and doubletalk, than probably any other discipline in the realm of letters. (It is not nor will ever be, I think, strictly a science, since it demands both a breadth of plain technical expertise and also a sensitivity to the aesthetic effects of verbal structures.) Nearly every critic has a pet theory constructed ad hoc and manages to include at least a sentence on some or other rhythm or rhyme in the critical article he is writing, yet the really careful and systematic studies--those with clear thinking and cautious use of terms--are very few and far between. And the student's manuals are legion, their quality indicating their author's motivations pretty clearly. In short, the confusions in the field extend all the way from the full theoretical treatises to the short appendices on "Prosody" found in every anthology of poetry. Yet I take this profusion, and confusion, of talk about the structure of verse as an indicator not of the superfluity of the subject but of its centrality, of the difficulty of the problems, and of the primacy of the concepts. We don't seem to be able to talk about the nature of poetry very well yet, or even about the structure of its medium, verse, but apparently we do all recognize the importance of trying to, since we keep coming back to it so often.

Simply put, the problem of terminology in the field is that we have continued to use the concepts handed down to us time out of mind without refinement or radical scrutiny, the confusions steadily compounding with each new Prosodia written. Examples are easy to finger: a major new theory proposed just a decade ago in an article entitled "Chaucer and the Study of Prosody" (followed by many of the like) is manifestly a theory of meter and nothing else, suggesting that the appalling lapses documented in its authors' method may extend beyond accuracy of detail and precision of terms even to fundamental categories and concepts. Then again, one recollects Saintsbury's compendious *History of English Prosody*, a work which was explicitly intended to be a study of the actual practice of the English poets at their verse-making and not a survey of the theories of the poet-critics and the scholar-specialists about the nature of verse (writers who have been referred to by nearly everyone for centuries without cavil as "prosodists," that is, theorists, even though T. S. Omond entitled his study of the theories of these prosodists *English Metrists*, an overspecification probably not defensible). And what are we to make of Robert Bridges' seminal monograph entitled *Milton's Prosody*, an inductive study of one poet's practice which very soon attains the level of descriptive generality adequate for a thoroughgoing theoretical explanation of the structure of one entire mode of verse-ordering? Or Dryden's lost (or unwritten) Prosodia? And what of the correlate term, *versification*--does it refer to *theoria*, or *praxis*? How is it to be distinguished from *prosody*, if it is to be distinguished at all? The most formidable and systematic account of English verse-structure, Jakob Schipper's *Englische Metrik*, was retitled in the English translation *A History of English Versification*, yet this is a work which is in sum not a theory or a review of theories but rather essentially a typology of forms. The most recent major study of English metrics is entitled *English Verse: Theory and History*, while Omond's 1897 account of the same phenomena is called *English Verse Structure*. Obviously such terms as these are being applied loosely to "metrical structure." Yet some older studies such as Louise Propst's on *Shelley's Versification* treat rhyme, sound-patterning, and stanzas as well as meter, as do most of the recent scholarly articles bearing that term in their titles.

We might have expected some help from the older German philologists, with their passion for linguistic precision, but what was treated in their works s.v. "Versbau und Strophenbau" a century ago is later terms "Metrik" ("metric" as a noun still has the sense of "complete art of verse") or "Verskunst" ("versecraft," clearly enough), so that here again the inductive and the deductive--the descriptive and the explanatory--domains are confounded. Nor are the more recent scholarly and bibliographical authorities any help. The *MLA Annual Bibliography* for many years included a section on "Versification," though lately this has been abandoned altogether, the articles both in criticism of poets' versecraft and on the structure of verse theory itself being dispersed entirely or else listed haphazardly in the sections on "Themes: Poetry" in the volume on Literature or on "Stylistics" and "Prosody" in the volume on Linguistics, though this latter section most directly concerns the so-called "suprasegmentals" which are a part of the phonological structure of the language and have nothing directly to do with verse-design (*qua design*) at all. This very evident confusion betokens more serious confusions within the scholarly community itself. The MHRA, for its part, has thought to supplant its category of "Metre" with two other, more nebulous ones, "Stylistics" and "Language, Literature, and the Computer"; this too is a palpable degeneration. (See further discussion s.v. the two works in Appendix D.) Thus the two source-lists comprising between them the primary research tool in the realm of letters treat one of the most important dimensions of poetry in a manner that is not simply unjustified but positively obfuscatory.

Some discriminations seem in order. On the most general level both *prosody* and *versification* might be said to be roughly synonymous: both refer to the study of the structure of verse--i.e., the structuring of its material or sensuous medium, sound--since alliteration, meter, and rhyme are all organizations or patterns of the various elements of the complex soundstream. They have often been used so, and in fact this semantic slippage has been encouraged by the dictionaries and the grammarians themselves. The O.E.D. terms *Prosody* "the science of versification; that part of the study of language which deals with the forms

of metrical composition, formerly reckoned as a part of grammar, and including also the study of the pronunciation of words (now called *phonology* or *phonetics*), esp. in relation to versification. Also, a treatise on this"--citing the earliest extant usage as ca. 1450. The etymology is very old, ultimately Greek, in contrast to a much later (Latin) derivation for *Versification*, which we are told is (1) "the action of composing verse; the art or practice of versifying," i.e. versecraft, verse-making, the first citation (notwithstanding a problematic reference in *The Court of Venus* ca. 1550) being Holland's in 1603, but also (2) "the form or style in which the words in a poetical composition are arranged; the structure of poetry or verse; measure, metre," the first recorded usage in this sense being Dryden's (1693). The former had been fine alone, but the latter sense contravenes it in effect, especially when "verse-structure" is taken in its widest sense and approximates the modern sense of "metric" taken as a noun. Webster's *Third New International* follows the O.E.D. definitions nearly verbatim.

Nearly a century after the O.E.D., the authoritative *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (in articles by Professor La Drière) defines *Prosody* as "the elements and structures involved in the rhythmic or dynamic aspect of speech, and the study of these elements and structures as they occur in speech and language (*linguistic prosody*) or in the compositions of the literary arts (*literary prosody*)." Versification is dismissed altogether by referring the reader back to the long article on *Prosody*, where *versification* is mentioned exactly twice--perhaps these were lapses--apparently implying synonymity or at least partial overlap of the two terms.

This sort of conflation has had a long and venerable history among grammarians. Ever since the codification of the medieval Trivium, Grammar has included along with its treatment of sounds, letters, accent, quantity, spelling, punctuation, syntax, and the like, a section on pronunciation, which came to be called the "Prosody," later "Prosodia." This section, often last, usually also included some discussion of the most significant of the special environments in which grammar (i.e. language) exhibits itself (so discussed because additional constraints--Rules--apply there, and also because the grammarians conceived of verse as *spoken*, hence under the domain of Pronunciation); this is of course verse. Thus *Prosody* came to have both a narrow and a broad sense, the one referring strictly to pronunciation and the other subsuming that along with discussion of verse-structure under a generic. Dr. Johnson (in the "Prosody" section of the Grammar prefixed to the *Dictionary*) exhibits this treatment of the terms as late as 1755 with his characteristic directness: "Prosody comprises *orthoepy*, or the rules of pronunciation, and *orthometry*, or the rules of versification." Since the analysis of the nature of syllables within normal language was assumed (naturally enough) to lead directly to the rules for the metrical treatment of syllables, this stratification made sense. Schematically:

orthometry --> metalinguistic rhythm [i.e., meter] --> Versification

 orthoepy --> linguistic rhythm [pronunciation] --> Prosody.

The English grammarians, however, preserved this distinction inconsistently, many of them preferring to retain *Prosody* as the coverterm for both pronunciation [prosody] and versification, while others dispensed with the generic. Barnabas Hampton's rather perfunctory little *Prosodia* of 1639 (based on Lyly) treats both verse and language together, as does Brightland's grammar of 1711, John Dennis's 1722 essay "Of Prosody," Richard Nares' *Elements of Orthoepy* in 1784, Lindley Murray's grammar in 1795, Richard Edwards' eccentric *Treatise on English Prosody* in 1813, (the American) Asa Humphrey's 1847 *English Prosody*, William Barnes in his 1854 *Philological Grammar*, and even a century later (as we have seen) in some very recent works. Yet on the other hand, Henry Pemberton's 1738 *Observations on Poetry* has a chapter "Of Versification," and many subsequent writers later in the century preserved the distinction: Say does so in 1745; the "rules of English versification" are treated in the anonymous 1757 *Beauties of Poetry Displayed*; Lord Kames discriminates "Versification" in 1762; the 1763 essay perhaps by Goldsmith is entitled

"Versification"; Hugh Blair's very influential rhetoric of 1783 treats the topic of verse s.v. "Versification," and William Belsham concurs in 1789; P. W. Fogg's grammar of 1796 separates its disquisitions on "Prosody" and "Versification"; and William Crowe's 1827 *Treatise on English Versification* pretty well seems to apply the fixative. Following Johnson, William Kenrick's dictionary of 1773 also includes a section treating "Of Prosody and Versification" in its prefatory Grammar, and Thomas Sheridan's 1780 dictionary has a "Prosodial Grammar" with one section reserved for versification. Bysse avoids the whole problem with his "Rules for Making VERSES," and a century later Coleridge clearly thinks of *versification* (Byron's) as praxis.

The confusions in terms, then, seem to have solidified in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries and have been preserved more or less steadily up to the present, as we saw in the O.E.D., which takes *prosody* as "theory of verse-structure" and *versification* as "versecraft, verse-technic." Yet modern linguists both structural and generative have quite explicitly preferred *prosody* in the narrower phonological sense, as may be seen notably in the work of David Crystal or even simply in the treatment given in the MLA. To give the linguists exclusive rights to *prosody* for the linguistic domain is no loss of essential categories for the study of verse, and indeed that implicit reassertion of the distinctive differences between verse structure and linguistic structure seems to me both salutary and essential just now. *Prosody* including the study of verse was formerly considered one part of Grammar. But verse-theory is not in fact an element of Grammar; it is an element of Aesthetics. It is only founded on the facts of Grammar. We do not confuse Sculpting with Stone masonry simply because both use stone as material, nor do we generally consider sculpting a variety of bricklaying. Verse indeed has a "grammar"--i.e., principles of organization--all its own, which though based upon is still in some very significant respects *different* from the grammar of the language. Versification is not, in Albert Lord's terms, "a special grammar within the grammar of the language"; it is a grammar *superimposed on* the grammar of the language. As such it must respect the inherent constraints of its material. But its principles of organization--as determined by its *aesthetic* ends--are constrained by the nature of its material at only the most derivative level.

In sum, we may say that the popular current usage of *prosody* to refer to verse-theory is a solecism; the term has the advantage over *versification* of possessing both a convenient adjectival form and a distinct agentive, but it is a graceless, dissonant word based on the Greek term for an entrance-ode, i.e. a poetic sub-genre not a category of theory, and since it has now been appropriated by the linguists for the rhythmic dimensions of speech I do not see why the well-worn and familiar *versification* will not serve us for "theory of verse," leaving *versecraft* and its siblings for praxis. That is the sense in which I have used the term in the title and throughout this book. The relation of the old Prosody to the new Stylistics is a subject for further treatment elsewhere.

IV: Structure and Functions of the Theory of Verse

If, within the realm of aesthetics, one takes poetics to be not theory of literature, in the Aristotelian sense, but more narrowly theory of poetry, then it may be said that poetics is comprised of three fundamental modes or functions: Theory, Analysis, and Criticism. The Analytic function (including, inter alia, versification) is engaged in the description and explanation of the elements and structures of the poem-object, activities which provide neutral information about both semantic and affective effects, based on the informing principles of Theory. The Theoretical function generates those assumptions, definitions, basic categories, rules, criteria, and methods which direct Analysis, the conjunction of both of which results in Criticism, first at the medial level of interpretation, where information is arrayed into meaningful patterns (i.e. a "reading" of the poem), then at the resultant level of

evaluation, where value judgments are made on the basis of either "formal" standards derived internally from the Theoretical assumptions or else "moral" standards derived from some external source such as political or religious doctrine. And each of the three functions has its superordinate, extra-referential level, where that function self-consciously assesses itself in relation to other external factors: these are the metatheoretical, metaanalytic, and metacritical.

Within the province of the Analytic mode, the most prominent domain is versification, or the study of what Aristotle would term the material cause of poetry--the elements and structures of its sensuous constituents, which as it happens in verse are organized rhythmically, i.e. via repetition or iteration. Versification therefore does *not* include: (1) studies which are directly philological or linguistic rather than literary in purpose, such as those using poetic texts for tracing changes in the language; (2) lexis (word-choice, "poetic diction") and lexical-semantic (sometimes also called "logical") structures in poetry; (3) figuration, i.e. metaphor, imagery, and rhetoric; (4) the genre, topos, sources, analogues, or progeny of a poem; (5) habits of composition, the chronology of a poet's works, or his biography or artistic development except insofar as the latter specifically concerns his control of the medium; or (6) literary history as a cultural and non-aesthetic enterprise.

Versification is, then, irrefragably *aesthetic*. The function of poetics in general is to point up those modes of poetic organization which are particularly "poetical," or unique to poetry. To that end verse-theory will take its evidence, observations, and discriminations wherever they are to be found. Since poetry is a verbal construct, its medium is language, and therefore it is likely that the professional linguist, who collects information about verbal structures, may have data which can be turned to use by the prosodist. In its raw state, however, as scientific information, it cannot. Poetry is an aesthetic phenomenon, and therefore the prosodist's task is to explicate and enhance our *aesthetic* understanding of the poem.

That distinction--between information and its uses--will also help resolve the old critical impasse about form vs. content in poetry. We will get nowhere in versification until we recognize clearly the fallacy of this dichotomy and take the poem as a complex structure of meanings, i.e. a semantic system, in which many diverse and disparate types of elements and structures *all contribute information* in varying degrees and at various levels. Every element and every structure is potentially capable of yielding up sense, a fact which we have been encouraged to ignore by the more obvious fact that the *elements* of poetry--words--unlike the elements in the other arts, themselves carry specific semantic import. But this should not persuade us that culturally fixed associations or meanings do not inhere in structures both below and above the morphological level. Schematically, one might say, words in syntax yield (lexical) semantic information; sounds in "formal" organization yield (prosodic) semantic information; both types of semantic information sum to the total poetic import. There is no such thing as sheer ornamentation. Some information--often much--may rest below the threshold of perceptibility, but no element is entirely meaningless.

At its furthest extension of explanatory power, verse-theory hopes to answer but a single question: why is *poetry* (taking whatever we are intuitively willing to accept as poetry) written in *verse*? As with all simple, axiomatic questions, though, the complex answer to this one will entail--perhaps reveal--most or all of our assumptions, categories, and terms. This formulation of the question will entail, for example, a matrix of two conceptual pairs (poetry, non-poetry; verse, non-verse) which will in turn generate a wider series of questions to be answered. As can be seen from several of the studies listed in Part I Section II of this book, such questions have long aroused intense debate among critics. More medially, the prosodist will be interested in answering questions about the structure and functions of verse-theory itself. What must such a theory be able to account for? What should it be designed to do? Should the theory offer simply descriptive adequacy, or must it provide explanatory adequacy as well? How is it to treat poetic *stasis* (identification of elements and structures) and *dynamis* (the dynamic interaction of elements)? What is the status of Rules in versification? To what extent do the ordering rules in verse conform to

rules embedded in the deep structure of language itself, and to what extent are they arbitrary? At what level(s) must the theory reflect the fact that poetry is an ontologically bivalent artform, having both textual and performative modes? If metrical theory should provide a discriminator or else a scale of delicacy for sorting metrical from unmetrical lines, should the same be done for rhyme, or stanza? All these questions and others besides remain to be answered in a full metatheoretical account.

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List of Abbreviations

<i>Anglia</i>	<i>Anglia: Zeitschrift für englischen Philologie</i>
<i>Archiv</i>	<i>Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen</i>
<i>BMC</i>	<i>British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books</i>
<i>CDI</i>	<i>Comprehensive Dissertation Index</i>
<i>DA/DAI</i>	<i>Dissertation Abstracts (International)</i>
<i>Essays and Studies</i>	<i>Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association</i>
<i>GRM</i>	<i>Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift</i>
<i>JAAC</i>	<i>Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i>
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
<i>LGRP</i>	<i>Literaturblatt für germanische und romanische Philologie</i>
<i>MLN</i>	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
<i>MLQ</i>	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
<i>MLR</i>	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>
<i>NUC</i>	<i>National Union Catalogue</i>
<i>PBB</i>	<i>Paul and Braune, ed., Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutsche Sprache und Literatur</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>
<i>ZDA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur</i>
<i>ZDP</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie</i>